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ABSTRACT

This book reports research on the question, "Why do mature women return to education?" Chapter 1 describes 49 women/participants (all of whom were attending colleges or universities in northern England) and their interviews. Chapter 2 discusses reasons women gave at the start of the interview for returning to education and different reasons that appeared later in the interviews. It links these reasons with the women's desire to change their lives and talks of the social pressures on women to conform to a particular identity. Chapter 3 addresses social influences on women's identity and links between them and the women's return to education. Chapter 4 discusses the impact of major life events or changes that directly or indirectly affected the women and made them reassess their lives and what they wanted from it. Chapter 5 focuses on the women's painful experiences in childhood. Chapter 6 addresses the effects of unplanned pregnancies and focuses on women whose painful experiences began just out of childhood. Chapter 7 concerns "mega-trauma," so-called because of the abusive nature and ongoing effects of what the women have lived or may be still living through. Chapter 8 has as its central theme the links the women are making with education now. Appendixes include a 117-item bibliography and index. (YLB)

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